



LO, THE EXCEEDINGLY WELL-TO-DO INDIAN!

*His Untutored Mind,
Dazed by Oil-Gotten
Gains, Has Only One
Worry—His Income Tax*

By HOMER CROY

YOU NEED shed no further tears on the poor, untutored red brother unless you have plenty to spare. Save them for the deluge of famine drives that are so thick about us. For him you need not say it with flour; save it for your wife. She is probably a lot more in need of it than John Redskin is.

If you have a tear that simply must be shed, save it for him when he goes to pay his income tax. You may then get out your handkerchief, for it is a truly touching sight to see the son of a savage walk up to a cold, uncaring collection box and drop through the unappreciative slot a check for two thousand dollars, which he will never see again, come what may.

In that respect Lo, the Poor Indian, has his troubles. The red brother hardly knows what to do with good automobiles the price they are to-day, the outrageous prices they charge for an up-to-date electrically operated talking machine and the poor value they give in silk shirts. It is enough to disgust an aborigine with civilization and make him want to go back to the buffalo.

Oil—that is the explanation. That is the thing that is making life so hard for them. Once they did not have anything to do but to sit around, scratch a little, ground on pleasant days and go over to the agency every quarter and draw their rations. But now all that is changed. Now they have all the white man's woes—only more so than the average white man, as the Osages in the Osage Nation are now the richest people in the world. They have more money in a minute than many well meaning people have in a month.

*Rattlesnakes, Alkali, and Then—
Then the Big Day*

The Osages were placed on a discarded part of Oklahoma, which was given over principally to rattlesnakes and alkali. It was the most undesirable part of Oklahoma, and in this line Oklahoma has a rather wide selection. The Osages, numbering something over 2,200, were dropped down here and started in to farm—when the spirit moved them. But the spirit was never unpleasantly aggressive. Things drifted along, the Indians just barely eking out a living, when a man in greasy overalls came through. A rig went up. Another. And pretty soon the rush was on. They had struck oil. But the government, instead of giving all the money to the Indian on whose land it happened to be discovered, put into effect a blanket drilling plan. That is, the whole of the Osage nation, which in size is quite a bit larger than New Jersey, was to be let out on leases and each Indian in the tribe was to share equally with all the other Indians. His own farm might be as dry as Gobi along late in the summer, and the farm across the fence might have a dozen wells going over the crown block, but both Indians were to share the same. And so it was with every member of the family, old and young, big or little, the just and the unjust alike. A child in arms was to draw as much as the grandfather on the sunny side of the house—as long as they were on the government payroll, and at the present writing there are 2,229 of these thus pleasantly situated.

During 1920 the Osages drew something under \$1,000 a month each from their oil leases. Not just the old men,

or the lady of the house, but the whole family—every child, half-brother, grandmother and step-uncle—just as long as they had their names on the government books, and few of them were so crowded that they could not get around to this. This would mean that in a family of father and mother and three kids they would be drawing down at least \$4,000 a month. And as an orchestra seat at the Jewel in Pawhuska—the biggest town in the county—costs only 27 cents, they were able to squeeze along pretty comfortably. The only fly in the ointment was the income tax.

Before they struck oil the Osages had pretty hard scrabbling. About all the money they had was made selling blankets and moccasins to the tourists. But do they do that now? Echo answers, No. The old hand loom that looked so good in the snapshots has passed out. There has been hardly one among the Osages since 1915. It is coming to be quite a curio. It is to be seen in the windows of only a few of the more progressive stores. Here the young Indians line up and wonder how it was operated and where they connected the electricity.

*The Indian Has the Laugh
On Greenwich Village*

But the blanket and moccasin business goes on just the same. In fact, more blankets, rugs and curios are being sold to-day in Pawhuska than ever before. The laugh is on the tourist. They pack into town, eager to buy a real Indian blanket with the heart's blood of some wrinkled, toothless squaw woven into it, but nary a drop of blood do they get. The Indians are snapping up all the good blankets. Only a few shoddy, unpopular patterns are left for the poor untutored traveler so anxious to fix up a perfect love of an apartment in Greenwich Village. But are the blankets made by a poor squaw with a papoose on her back and a soup stone on the fire? Not on your, or anybody's, life. They come from old New York, from some of the finest power looms in the United States. The Oklahoma Indians have practically gone out of the blanket business; they simply can't go to all the movies they want to, make the round of the stores and take a spin in their cars and have any time left for the cultivation of the arts. The poor squaw the tourist felt so sorry for is about to outbid him. If he doesn't go a good ways down in his pocket, the perfect love of an apartment will have to go without a single specimen of native weaving.

Making Indian blankets is now a profitable business. But not among the Indians. The blankets come from New York or from Oregon. There is one town in Oregon which is doing a splendid Indian blanket business. It is putting out this season more than a hundred Indian designs. One of their drummers covering the Oklahoma field kept sending in calls for more and more

designs; they were rushed to him, but orders would come in for additional designs. At last he was called in and asked how it was that he was doing such a rushing business in jacquards, as they

are called in the trade. And then it came out that he was going from tribe to tribe and getting orders for their own particular kind of blanket with all its tribal symbols, having the factory

make up a conventionalized design embodying these symbols and then sending them back to the Indians. And so they are doing to-day. The Indians cannot get enough of their own power loom blankets.

In fact, so eager are the Indians to get them that they cannot wait for the salesman to come around to supply them to the local stores and so they order from the catalogue. The Indian boys and girls, who have been off to school, fill out the order sheet for the parents, and soon the proud father and mother are moving down the street simply turning 'em green.

One of the season's most popular sellers is No. 1,029-15, called by name "The Happy Hunting Ground." It is not a tribal blanket with merely a local sale, but meant to appeal to all noble redmen. In the professional language of the sales department, all you gotta do is to show it. It sells itself. On it are pictured the sun and the stars, the tepee and the tomahawk, the bear and the buffalo with a few frogs and some quick biting fish.

*A Thousand Per Month
Isn't Bad Money*

And so it is with moccasins, peace pipes, painted heads, war clubs, drums, poisoned arrows and on down the curio line. The modern oil Indian simply hasn't got time to string beads and do all the work that is necessary to turn out a good, first class salable moccasin, so the business is now going over to the sweatshops and East Side factories operated by immigrants, who wouldn't know an Indian if they met him in the subway. They never saw a real Indian in their lives. All they know about him is what they see in the movies. They think that the Indians are still wearing feathers and riding horses. They don't know that the modern Indian has to have an \$8 hat or he thinks he is practically bareheaded, and that about all the walking he does is to get out to the garage. They feel so sorry for the poor Indian, little realizing that the poor downtrodden Indian is being a lot better paid than they are. They judge all the Indians by the Los Angeles variety. A Los Angeles Indian gets \$6 a day; an Oklahoma Indian gets a thousand dollars a month.

What do they do with their money? What can they do with it in Pawhuska? Pawhuska has some three thousand souls, most of whom run rooming houses. It is a pretty weary round the Indians lead, even with all their money. They are not welcome in the big hotels in Tulsa and Oklahoma City. All they can do is to stay at home and spend it among the three thousand souls.

Before you get there you hear about their white chauffeurs and you have visions of immaculate mummies sitting aloofly at the steering wheel, remaining motionless for hours at the curb, but not much. Somebody has put the wrong card in the belltopcon. They are col-

*Being Too Prosperous to
Work, the Oklahoma In-
dian Buys Tribal Blan-
kets Woven in New York*

larless and coatless and haven't felt the urge to shave for the best part of a week. Indolent, insolent—they couldn't hold down a job in New York longer than it took to get the employment agency on the telephone—which sometimes would be quite a little stay.

The chauffeurs insult them covertly, cheat them, lie to them and then leave the rest to the garage man. And when the garage man gets through with them they sure know that life is real and that life is earnest. Most of the Indians have guardians, who are supposed to see that they are not cheated out of their money; the Indians are in the hands of their guardians and can hardly spend a dollar without the sanction of the guardians. The guardian is an appointee of politics and is not always what Billy Sunday would like. Many of them live off their wards. They have to buy the kind of car and of whom the guardian says—which explains why, when you ask an Indian how much he paid for his car, you get such a shock.

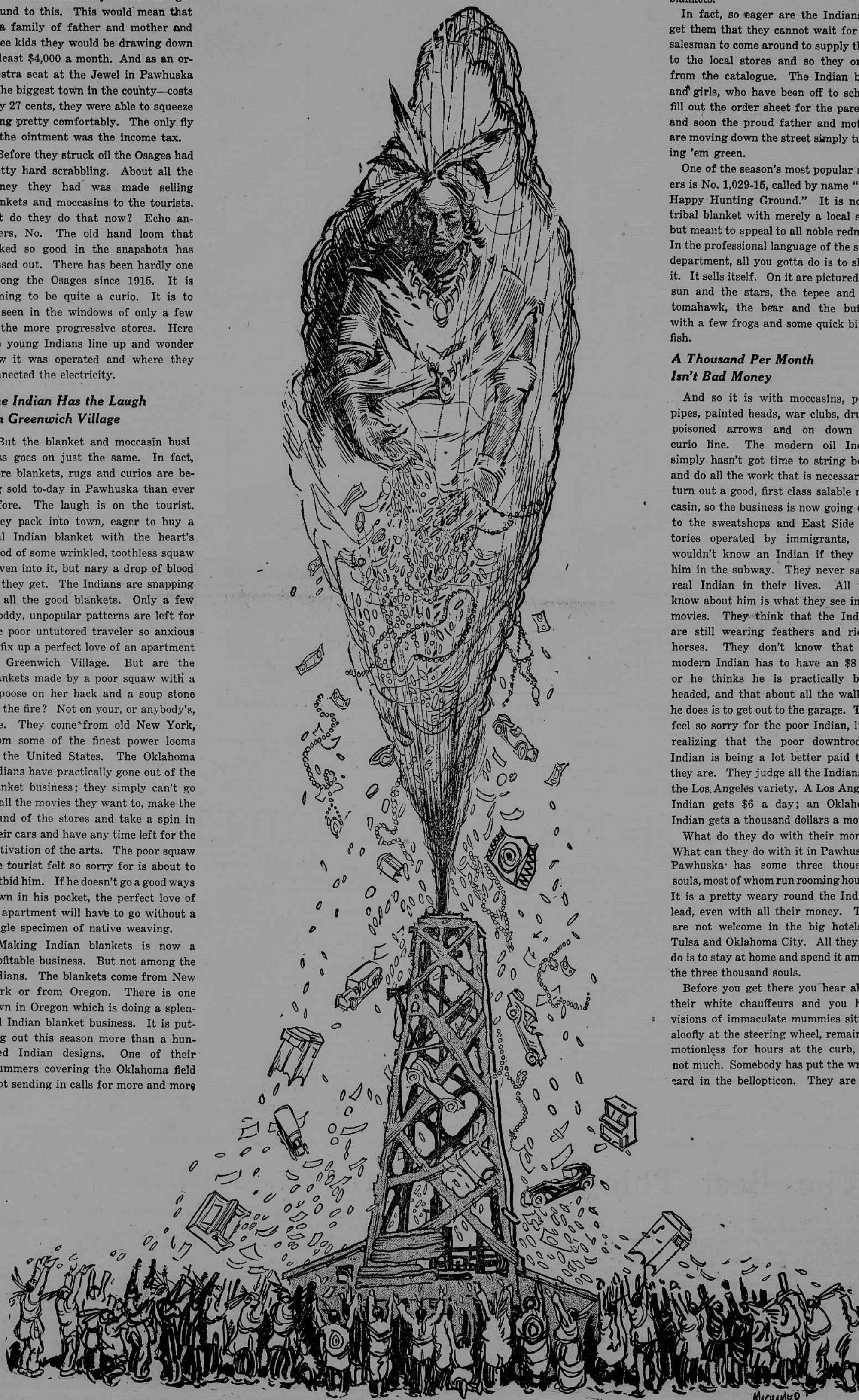
If there is one thing that an Indian likes it is to show some speed when he drives. The roads of Oklahoma were never laid out by Barney Oldfield. Little attention is paid to speed laws—and away the Indian brother goes. When something happens to the car it is taken to the garage and the repair man feels good all over.

Indian custom is Indian custom. There is one Osage who several years ago fell ill of the dreaded disease smallpox. Worse he became and at last was taken outside the Indian village to die and over him the last tribal rites were said. His pony was killed and he was left to go in peace to the happy hunting ground. But he didn't do so. He stayed right in Oklahoma. He got better and better, and at last was well. But not to the tribe. To them he was officially dead, and now he is an outcast. By himself in a cabin built of oil tins and castoff boards he lives with his dogs, without speaking to any other Indian. But to the government he is still alive—alive to the extent of drawing his eight hundred dollars a month. And so alone with it he lives.

*Osage Jewelry Nowadays
Is Like Fifth Avenue's*

To look at Pawhuska you would think that it lived out of a mail order catalogue, but go into one of the jewelry stores. You'd be surprised. Some of the jewelry would look well going up Fifth Avenue. The Indians come in, in their catalogue blankets, looking as if they didn't have more than a couple of dollars to their name and, point to a diamond that looks as if it ought to have a guard with it, grunt, "Me likeum. Take him." And down into the mysterious depths of their undergarments they go and come up with the long green. No tick for them. The shop doesn't have to keep a squad of installment collectors for them. They've got it with them. The finest of silverware, table sets, carafes and so on till the sideboard groans. But that is for company. When meal time comes they all gather around a big communal bowl and go after it without accessories.

A movie, a baseball game, a gallon of ice cream, all the soft drinks they can swill, a spin over the roads rutted from passing oil trucks and once a year a rodeo at a Fourth of July celebration; a trunk full of silk shirts, a new talking machine with a wagonload of records, another movie and some near beer—that is about the way the richest people in the world live. It does not make one jealous. It doesn't make one want to trade his little old New York job and head for the simple life. Not at all. In fact, it almost makes one content with the rent he is paying this year.



The Great Spirit as He Appears to the Osages